

Frederiksfort
Frederiksted
St. Croix Island
Virgin Islands

HABS No. VI-47

HABS
VI,
1-FRED,
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, O.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FREDERIKSFORT

HABS No. VI-47

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VI
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3-

Location: Frederiksted (North end of Frederiksted between the extension of King Street and the shoreline), St. Croix, Virgin Islands

Present Use: The fort has been restored and opened to the public.

Significance: This 18th-century Danish fort of unusual design is one of the pivotal structures within Frederiksted Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1752
2. Alterations and additions: A second story of wooden frame construction has been added to the north and part of the east curtain, and a square concrete clock tower has been built above the entrance way in the south curtain wall. Wooden frame extensions have been added to both sides of the original second story to the west.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The original building is well preserved but in several instances the design is obscured by additions and by refinishings. The fort differs in plan from the typical 18th-century fort.
2. Condition of fabric: Structurally the buildings appears to be in fair condition. The wooden interior of the main wing is badly infested with termites, and finishes throughout are in poor to fair condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Fort measures approximately 170' x 175'; fort, horse yard, and gun platform measure approximately 270' x 285'. The fort has a trapezoid plan with four wings built around a courtyard and with projecting bastions at the salient angles of the widest side of the fort and one in the center of the shortest side.

The long side of the fort faces the sea to the west. A three pointed breastwork with a gun platform in the center extends across the front of the fort. An enclosed horse yard and stable area is located north of the fort.

2. Foundations: Rubble and brick masonry.
3. Walls: The walls are masonry with brick vaulting and arches. All exterior masonry is plastered and painted red with white trim. The curtain wall between the two seaward bastions is two stories. The rest of the fort was originally only one story with a continuous gundeck over the bastions and the south and north curtains. The west wing has a masonry arcade on the ground floor with niches in the flanking piers of the sally port.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The fort has two entrances, the sally port in the center bay of the west curtain wall and a vaulted passageway through the south wing. A gateway in the east wall just north of the fort provides access to the horse yard. The entrances have wooden gates of double-board construction with metal strips covering their exterior sides. The sally port has projecting quoins on the exterior facade. All doors and window openings throughout the ground floor are equipped with storm shutters of double-board construction.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The window openings toward the exterior are barred. On the second floor throughout the shutters have 3 panels, and windows have double-hung, 12-light glazed sash (east wing) and interior jalousie shutters with fixed and moveable louvres. On the second floor the center five bays toward the courtyard have segmented and triangular pedimented window head mouldings. The flanking bays have recessed panels below the window openings.
5. Roof:
 - a. Shape: All one-story sections of the fort have flat brick pavement roofs supported on wood beams and purlins or on brick vaulting. The second-story sections have hipped roofs with corrugated metal roofing on sheathing and wood trusses. The additions to the west wing have shed roofs with corrugated metal roofing.

- b. Cornice, eaves: The second-story section of the west curtain has a cornice and a parapet wall and internal gutters. The central section of the parapet on both long sides of the wing is raised to twice its regular height.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The curtains are one room deep and the rooms are arranged in a row inter-connected and accessible from the courtyard. There are no internal hallways or passages. The bastions contain one large vaulted chamber with a center pillar.
2. Stairways: Two exterior brick masonry staircases lead from the southwest and northwest corners of the courtyard to the bastions and the gundeck. Two interior wooden staircases, one in the north and another in the east curtain, provide access to the newer second stories of these curtains.
3. Flooring: The ground floor has pavements in brick, Gotland limestone tile and concrete. On the second floor all uncovered areas are paved in brick. The floors of the second story wings are tongue-and-groove pine flooring throughout.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: On the ground floor, the ceilings are brick on beams or brick vaulting. On the second floor the west wing has a wooden tray ceiling with cornice and trim moldings, while the north wing has exposed trusses and the west wing has a furred wooden ceiling. The masonry walls are plastered except for the second floor of the west wing where all walls have wooden board covering. The wooden frame second stories of the north and east wing have wooden sheathing.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Interior doors are panelled and have moulded wooden casings. The center room in the second story of the west wing has dado mouldings and baseboard.
6. Hardware: All storm shutters have wrought iron strap hinges, wall hooks, head and sill hooks and in some cases ring pulls and bar brackets. Interior shutters have H and L hinges and surface bolts. Gates and doors are equipped with a variety of wrought iron surface bolts, box locks, mortise locks, hooks, porcelain and brass knobs, wrought iron hasps and hooks of several sizes.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Lighting: The fort is fully wired for electricity.

D. Site:

1. General Setting: The fort is located at the north end of Frederiksted between the extension of King Street and the shoreline. A small municipal park separates it from the Customs House to the south.

The horse yard to the north of the fort is surrounded by a 7- to 10-foot high masonry wall. It opens directly into the area between the fort and the breastwork in front of the fort. Kitchen and stable buildings are built against the north wall of the horse yard.

2. Landscaping, design: The court of the fort proper is paved in brick laid in a fan pattern radiating out from the sally port. A decorative plant box with 8 stacked cannons is placed in the center of the court.

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PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For further informaton, see the National Register of Historic Places.